B424

The SECOND PART OF THE GREAT QUESTION CONCERNING THINGS INDIFFERENT IN Religious Worship,

Briefly Stated;

And tendred to the Conſideration of all Conſcientious and Sober men.

By the ſame Author.

Mr. *Hales* in his Treatiſe of *Schiſm.*

When either Falſe or uncertain Concluſions are obtruded for Truth, and Acts either unlawful, or miniſtring juſt ſcruple, are required of us to be performed; in theſe Caſes conſent were Conſpiracy, and open Conteſtation is not Faction or Schiſm, but due Chriſtian Animoſity.

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UMI

THE PREFACE TO THE Chriſtian and Candid Reader.

IN *the Buſineſs, not of* Decent *or* Natural, *but of* Deviſed *and* Unneceſſary Ceremonies in the Worſhip of God, *there are, Chriſtian Reader, two Queſtions at this day more hotly diſputed then ever: The one is,* Whether they may lawfully be Impoſed? *The other is,* Whether when they are Impoſed, they may lawfully be obſerved? *The firſt of theſe I have already handled; with what ſucceſs and ſatisfaction to others, becomes not me to determine. The Second is now the Subject of this preſent Diſcourſe; upon which indeed the whole ſtreſs of the Controverſie lies; and that becauſe of the Opinion of many Conſcientious and ſober men*[a], *who, though they are ready to acknowledge, that the Magiſtrate ought not to clog the Worſhip of God with uncommanded Traditions and Inventions of his own, yet they conceive, that when ſuch things, as are not expreſly forbidden by the Word of God, are Impoſed, they may and ought to be practiſed, rather then by the forbearance of them, men ſhould be forced to quit the exerciſe of their Miniſtry, which is ſo great a good, that they think it ought to be preſerved, though with the undergoing of ſome inconvenient Obſervances.*

[a] B. Morton. D. Burges. M. Sp. in., &c.

To those who either in their Writings do affirm, or by their practise do own this perswasion, I desire to be very tender; but withal, I must take leave to profess, that I am not as yet satisfied, either with the Assertion, or with the Argument which is brought to back it. For the Question is not, Whether it be convenient *or* Inconvenient, *but whether it be* lawful *or* unlawful *to comply or not? And therefore it should first be enquired,* quo jure, *before we ask* cui bono? *that is, in all things which concern our Practise; we should first be satisfied, that the thing we do is lawful, before we state to our selves, that we have a good end in doing it: For since the least evil may not be done to obtain the greatest good, and since our Lord Christ hath sufficient power to propagate his Gospel without our sin; it is to be feared, that at the last day he will not accept this as a sufficient answer; that we mingled his Worship with the, otherwise unlawful, Commands of men, meerly to maintain our Liberty of preaching; since he can make our suffering for his Truth, to be as effectual a means for the Conversion of others, as our open and free declaring it. As the Apostle* Paul *confesses, that* his Bonds *did beget many to the Faith of Christ. I wish therefore that too many do not indulge themselves a dangerous Latitude, not so much to preserve their* Ministry, *as to retain their* Maintenance, *and so to their sin of Compliance, add a secret distrust of Gods Providence.*

But what others may be induced to do, concerns not me at all, who have nothing to do to judge anothers Conscience; *but having my self been frequently importuned to conform, and that by persons whom I very much respect and honour, I have adventured to publish my Reasons, why for the present I cannot think it Lawful: Which is a work so liable to censure and misconstruction; that I should never have undertaken it, but that I would make it appear, it is not humour, but Conscience, that hath guided me unto this resolution.*

tion. And though it is poſſible I may be ſuſpected to favour the irregular Fancies of ſome, with whom every ſlight and trivial difference is a ſufficient ground of ſeparation; yet I can aſſure thee, Chriſtian Reader, I do ſo much abhor the Practiſes and Opinions of thoſe men, that though I may forbear the uſage of our Ceremonies, *yet no occaſion ſhall make me forſake the* Communion of our Church, *whoſe Doctrine, in the moſt material and diſputable Points of it, I have already aſſerted; and if I do not in all Particulars comply with her Diſcipline; it is not becauſe I would eclipſe her ſplendor, or leſſen her Authority; but becauſe I take ſome of the things Impoſed to be of that Nature, as no Power how great and lawful ſoever, can juſtifie and warrant the uſe of them.*

I ſhall conclude therefore, with what I find in the Oxford Reaſons, *excellently argued againſt Impoſing the* Covenant: Thus have we, *ſay they,* clearly and freely repreſented our preſent judgment, which, upon better Information in any particular, we ſhall be ready to rectifie. Only we deſire, it may be conſidered, that if any one ſingle reaſon or ſcruple remain unſatisfied (though we ſhould receive ſatisfaction in all the reſt) the Conſcience alſo would remain ſtill unſatisfied; and in that caſe, it can neither be reaſonable for them to preſs us, who cannot ſatisfie us; nor lawful for us, that cannot be ſatisfied, to ſubmit unto the ſaid Covenant, *This Paſſage, if in ſtead of the word* Covenant, *we read* Ceremonies, *contains as much as I have to ſay: And I am not without hope, that thoſe who were ſo ſcrupulous of being Impoſed upon* then, *will be as tender of Impoſing* now; *ſince the* Ceremonies *in queſtion, are by many thought to be as contrary to the* Law of God, *as they had reaſon to think the* Covenant *was to the* Law of the Land.

Ch. Ch. *Sept.* 10. 1661.

Edward Bagſhaw.

THE SECOND PART Of the GREAT QUESTION Concerning INDIFFERENT THINGS IN RELIGIOUS WORSHIP, &c.

Queſt. *Whether it be Lawful to ſubmit unto the Uſe and Practiſe of things, commonly ſuppoſed to be Indifferent, when they come to be Impoſed and made Neceſſary in Religious Worſhip?*

FOR the righter Stating and clearer Underſtanding of this Queſtion, I ſuppoſe theſe two Things.

1. By *Things commonly ſuppoſed to be Indifferent*, I do not mean ſuch things as are purely, and in their own Nature *Indifferent*; ſuch are the *Time* and *Place* of Religious Worſhip. Nor, 2. Such things, as in their own nature, though Indifferent, yet ſeem to have a greater Aſpect and tendency unto that which is Natural Decency and Order, then otherwiſe; as, to *ſtand or kneel at time of Publick Prayer*,

Prayer, and the like: In both theſe Caſes, though perhaps the Magiſtrate doth ill to interpoſe his Command, becauſe things of a Religious Concernment belong not properly and immediatly to his Juriſdiction; yet I ſee not why his Command ſhould make us ſcruple or forbear the doing of them: For whatever, either in it ſelf, or in common eſtimation among ſober men, is more *decent* and *comely*, though it gaines no ſtrength from the Command Impoſing it, yet there can no reaſon be given, why it ſhould loſe any. Therefore by *Things Indifferent* in the Queſtion, I mean ſuch things, as being conſidered at large, and diveſted from all Circumſtances, may perhaps be done or not done, and that lawfully; yet *pro hic & nunc*, with reference to the power which impoſes, and to the end which continues them, it is queſtionable whether they be *Indifferent* or not; ſuch are, the *Surplice in time of Publick Prayer*, *Muſick in Churches*, *Preſcribed Forms of Prayer*, *the Croſs in Baptiſm*, *Kneeling at the Sacrament*, *Bowing at the Name of Jeſus*, and the like; which are not ſo purely *Indifferent*, but that they offend the *Weak*, who doubt; and cauſe many fierce and vehement Contentions, even amongſt the *Learned*, who diſpute, whether they be lawful or not: And about theſe things alone, do I deſire to be underſtood in my following Diſcourſe.

2. By *Submitting*, I do not mean, a being preſent at ſuch time and place, where theſe Rites are uſed, but actively concurring to, and perſonally doing them our ſelves: For as Mr. *Hales* excellently obſerves, *What if thoſe to whom the Execution of the Publick Service is committed, do ſomthing either unſeemly or ſuſpitious, or peradventure unlawful? What if the Garments they wear, be cenſured, nay indeed be ſuſpitious? What if Geſture or Adoration be uſed to the Altars, as now we have learned to ſpeak? What if the Homiliſt have preached, or delivered any Doctrine for truth, of which we are not well perſwaded? Yet for all this, we may not ſeparate, except we be conſtrained perſonally to bear a part in them our ſelves.* And therefore the Queſtion doth not ſo properly concern the People, who, for ought I know, may be preſent where theſe *Ceremonies* are uſed, without being defiled by them, as *Elijah* was a looker on upon *Baals Prieſts*; and the Apoſtle tels us, we *may eat meat*, and therefore hear the Word, *though in an Idols Temple*. But I chiefly mean the Preachers and Miniſters of the Word, upon whoſe Perſonal Practiſe all theſe things are commanded,

1 Kings 19.

1 Cor. 8.

manded, and this I hold utterly unlawful for them to submit unto.

First, Because the Magistrate hath no power to impose things doubtful and disputable upon the Practise of any in the Service of God; and therefore it cannot be lawful for any, to obey him, when he so imposes: For the clearing of which Reason, two things are to be explained. Arg. 1.

1. That the *Magistrate hath no Power to impose things doubtful and disputable in the Service of God.*

2. That *if he doth impose, we cannot lawfully obey him.*

The first Assertion is this; That *the Magistrate hath no Power to impose things doubtful and disputable in the Service of God*: And the Reason is clear, because God hath given him no such Commission: For since it is most Equal and Reasonable, that God should be the sole Orderer of his own Worship, and if in his Revealed Will (which the Magistrate is as much bound to obey, as the meanest Christian) God hath not authorized any to enforce upon the Practise of others, things which are of a doubtful and disputable nature; then cannot the Magistrate lawfully take to himself that power, because in so doing, he goes beyond his Bounds, and exceeds those Limits, which God hath set all that profess Faith in him, *viz.* of not *being wise and holy above what is written.* Besides, our Saviour while he was upon Earth, though he had *all Power committed to him*, as Mediator, yet he neither exercised himself, nor intrusted to his Apostles such Power, that they should force or compell any to obey him, because *his Kingdom is not of this world, i. e.* not to be acquired or enlarged by those Arts and Policies which humane Princes use; but *Converts* only are his Subjects; and those he alone owns for Members of his Church, whom Preaching and sound Perswasion hath won over to him. And therefore it is very incongruous for the Magistrate, who pretends to act for Christ, to take more upon him then Christ himself did, and by enforcing things dubious, make Religion a very uneasie and unpleasant yoke, and thereby fright Conscientious and Sober men from the Service of him, whose honour he would seem to promote; which is directly contrary, both to the Nature of Religion, and to the Ends of Christian Government.

Against this, in behalf of the Civil Magistrates Power, it is urged.

1. That

Obj. 1. 1. That *Jehoshaphat*, *Hezekiah*, and other Kings of the *Jews*, are commended for repairing and beautifying the Temple and Worship of God; and likewise *David* made *Musical Instruments*, appointed the *Courses of the Priests*, prescribed their *Garments and manner of Service*, none of which were provided for by the Law of *Moses*; from whence it followes, that Christian Magistrates have still the same power, which the *Jewish* Princes had; that is, to regulate and order the outward Circumstances of Gods Worship, though over *Substantials*, and *Articles* of *Faith*, it is acknowledged they have no Power at all.

Answ. But I Answer:

Deut. 17.18, 19. 1. That whatever the *Jewish* Princes did in regulating Gods Worship, they had a particular and expres Law, which did exact it from them; and which in all, even the smallest Punctilio's and Circumstances, had so provided, that they could not fail of knowing their Duty; whereas Christian Religion is in most Particulars of lesser moment, more free and undetermined, and therefore there is not the same parity of Reason, that the example of the *Jewish* Princes then, should be obligatory to our Magistrates now, because the Law is altered, and that accurateness in small things needs not so much be insisted on. For now the Magistrate most consults Gods honour, and his own duty, if he leaves the Christian Law as large as he found it; and doth not urge, either little, or much less doubtful things, because God, in not requiring them, shews, that the pressing them, will not be a work pleasing or acceptable to him, because it laies an Imputation upon his Wisdom and Holiness, as if he had not in his Word sufficiently provided for his own Worship.

2. And more particularly, to that Instance of *David*, I Answer, That whatever *David* did in regulating the Service of God, in appointing *Musical Instruments*, *Priests Garments*, and the like, he did it not by his Authority, as *King*; but by Gods Command, as a *Prophet*; as will appear from these Places of Scripture: One is, 2 *Chron.* 8.14. Where it is said, that *Solomon appointed according to the Order of David his Father, the Courses of the Priests, to their Service, and the Levites to their Charges, to praise and minister before the Priests, as the duty of every day required*: *For so*, saith the Text, *David the man of God commanded*. Where that Expression, *The man of God* (which is a Name given only to Persons

sons extraordinarily inspired, such (were the Prophets of old) sufficiently shews in what capacity *David* ordered these things; not barely as a King, but as a *man of God*, i. e. by God himself excited and inspired to do it. Again, when *Hezekiah* restored the Purity of Gods Worship, which his Father *Ahaz* had polluted, it is said, that *He set the Levites in the House of the Lord with Cymbals, with Psalteries, and with Harps, according to the Commandment of David, and of Gad the Kings Seer, and of Nathan the Prophet, For*, saith the Text, *so was Gods Commandment by the Prophets*: Whence it plainly appears, that *David* did no more in these Particulars, then what God himself had by his Prophets commanded. And therefore when *David* gave to *Solomon* his Son the Pattern of Gods House, and of all the Rooms and Apartments in it, it is said to be, *the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit*, among which things are reckoned, *the Courses of the Priests and of the Levites, and for all the work of the Service of the House of the Lord*: Of which the Text saies, *All this, said David, the Lord made me understand in Writing, by his hand upon me, even all the works of this Pattern*. From whence it evidently follows, that not the least Circumstance which *David* then ordered, came from his own motion, or was established barely by his Kingly Authority, but it did proceed from the infallible Directions of Gods Spirit, and therefore Magistrates cannot urge his Example, unless they will pretend at least to his Divine Assistance, and not *Regal*, but *Prophetical* Authority.

2 Chron. 29. 25.

1 Chron. 28. 12. V. 19.

Lastly, Since the Objecters allow that over *Substantials*, as for example, to make or command *Articles of Faith*, Magistrates have no power; methinks it demonstrably followes from their own Concessions, that over *Circumstantials* they have much less: Since *Substantials* concern the Essence of Worship, and therefore may seem to be a just ground for Imposition; upon which, the Apostles found the Equity of their *Canon*, about forbidding *things strangled, Blood* and *Fornication*, because they were *ἀναγκαῖα, things very necessary*; but *Circumstantials* may very well be omitted, without any prejudice either to Gods Worship, or to the Magistrates Power; and the very needlesseness and superfluousness of them, may seem justly enough, to make it unlawful to impose them: For if in general, the Magistrate hath nothing to do, whether I am a *Christian* or not, since as a *man*, I have a Title to his Protection: then sure, when I acknowledge my self a

Acts 15. 28.

Christian, in what kind of *Habit*, *Posture*, or *Words*, I will worship God, the Magistrate hath much less to do, because *Charity*, *Forbearance*, *Doing as he would be done by*, *not to lay a stumbling Block before his Brother*, and the like, are as much Parts of the Christian Magistrates Duty, as Obedience to the Magistrate in all lawful, and therefore not disputable things, is the duty of a Christian Subject.

Obj. 2. 2. It is objected again, That there are many Prophecies in Scripture, that Magistrates should own and defend Christian Religion, and in particular, that *Kings should be Nursing Fathers*, and *Queens Nursing Mothers to the Church*; and therefore certainly they may employ their Authority for the beautifying and adorning it in all such outward Circumstances of Worship, as meerly appertain to Decency and Order.

Isa. 49. 23.

Answ. But I Answer:

1. There are indeed many Prophecies in Scripture, that Kings and Inferiour Magistrates shall submit to the Faith of Christ; yet it doth not follow, that therefore they are to take upon them to model and regulate any part of his Worship. For as in the Opinion about the *Reign of the Saints*, it is clear from Scripture, that a time will come when the Saints shall rule the world, as in *Daniel*, *The Saints of the Most High shall take the Kingdom, and possess the Kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever*: Yet it doth not follow, that therefore they ought to take Arms, and by violence possesse themselves of an Earthly Kingdom, because this contradicts so many other places, wherein *Patience*, *Self-denial*, and *Waiting upon God*, is enjoyned them. So in this case, there is a vast difference between a Magistrates becoming Christian, and his medling with Prescribing Forms of Christian Worship, which no Prophecy did ever mention: Nay on the contrary, in stead of foretelling any such Imperious and authoritative Rule of Princes, in Religious matters, the Scripture mentions their lowly and humble deportment; as in *Davids* Prophecy concerning the *Messiah*: *All Kings shall fall down before him, all Nations shall serve him.* And in *Isaiah*, *Kings shall see and arise; Princes also shall worship.* Nay in that very place, where there is mention of *Kings being Nursing Fathers*, it is added, *they shall lie down to thee with their Face towards the earth, they shall lick the dust of thy Feet*: Which places do rather argue the Magistrates awful Reverence

C. 7. 18.

Psal 72. 11. Isa. 49 7.

verence of, and respectful submission to the Church of Christ, then their exercising Authority over it. At least thus much may be evinced, that, though Magistrates lose no power by becoming Christians, yet they gain none, but in every thing are to act as Servants to the Law of Christ; from which, as nothing may be taken, so to it nothing ought to be added; no, though it may be patronized under the names of *Decency* and *Order*; which if we make to signifie, not *Natural*, but *Devised* and Fancied *Order*, it is that which all Superstitions plead, to defend their unwarrantable Traditions and Inventions by. And therefore to pursue the *Simile* a little farther, it were to be wished, that *Kings* would so far prove *Nursing-Fathers*, as to use their Christian Subjects in this particular, as *Nurses* do their Children, *i. e.* only to put into their Mouths, that which the Apostle *Peter* cals λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα, *Reasonable* and *sincere* or *unmingled Milk*, *i. e.* only Gods Word in its Native Purity, without being sowred by the Harshness of Impositions, or corrupted, rather then sweetned, by the undue mixture of Humane Fancies and Imaginations. 1 Pet. 2, 2.

2. The best way for Christian Magistrates to advance and beautifie Religion, is not by the Prodigality of their Purses, in *Stately Structures*, *Choyce Musick*, *Curious Pictures*, and the like, wherein Superstition will be sure to out-do them; or by the Severity and Rigour of their Laws in small things, but in the Piety of their Lives, and strictness of their Civil Government. For let Magistrates once cleanse the Soyl of Humane Nature, by making sharp and wholsom Laws against Vice and Immorality, and then weed it, by impartial punishing of *Drunkenness*, and other Disorders, which the Apostle cals *Works of the Flesh*; then Religion will make its own way into mens hearts, and produce an outward Composure in Service, suitable to its own inward Worth and Excellence: Whereas the Magistrates medling with *Outward Forms*, begets only a Face of Religion, which is so much the more loathsom, in that it is used commonly as a Cover, to hide many foul Enormities, which without that Mask, no sober Magistrate could have the heart to tolerate. I conclude therefore since, 1. God never gave. 2. Christ never exercised. 3. The Examples of the *Jewish* Princes, nor Scripture Prophesies do warrant such an imposing Power, especially in things doubtful, as some contend for, it follows, that the Civil Magistrate hath no

such power, and ought not to take it upon him: Which was my first Assertion.

The Second Assertion was this, That *if the Magistrate doth impose things doubtful, we cannot lawfully obey him*: And the Reason is clear, from what is already argued: For no man can lawfully do any thing in the Worship of God, but what he is satisfied he might do, whether it were by men commanded or not; therefore he that hath no other warrant for his doing any thing, then the Command of the Magistrate, when it is clear the Magistrate hath no Power to command him, must needs sin in what he does: And that,

1. Because thereby he visibly disowns, and detracts from Gods Soveraignty, who is sole Lord of the Conscience, whose Honour is then given to another, when by our submitting to them, we seem in fact at least, to acknowledge, that they have Power to impose: For in the Church of *Christ*, by an Overt Act, to own and countenance the Jurisdiction and Authority of another, this is to lessen Christs Legislative Power, and to make *Two Heads* of the Church, a *Visible* and *Invisible*, or a *Political* and *Spiritual* one, which is a distinction that the Scripture knows not; and only the *Popish*, that is the *Antichristian* Church makes use of.

2. Because by obeying what is in it self doubtful, and in the Imposer unlawful, we shall consent to, and approve the Magistrates sin, and so harden him to continue more fierce and peremptory in it. Now if it be a Rule in general, that we *ought to reprove our Brother, and not to suffer sin upon him*, much less to consent, and to partake with him in it: How much more is it our duty, to prevent, so far as we can, any sin in our Magistrate, (whose happiness we are bound in especial manner to procure and pray for) and this must be done, by our modest and humble, but yet resolute and constant refusing to obey his Impositions; wherein we are so to proceed, as to evidence both by our Language, and Actions, that it is not Peevishness or Petulancy, much less a disobedient and contradicting humour, which puts us upon it, but meerly Conscience of our Duty, both to God and Him; namely, because the Magistrate, as to these matters, is not in Gods stead, God not having committed unto Christian Magistrates, but unto his Son, the Government of his Church, and that in the Outward

Lev. 19.

ward Polity, as well as in the Inward Purity of it: For where the inward Purity is not wrought, there outward Conformity is not a serving God, but men, and proves a Service, which as God requires not, so neither will he at all accept. And therefore since even the highest Magistrates on earth are accountable to God, who hates Oppression, under pretence of advancing Piety; this, as it ought to make all Magistrates afraid how they meddle with imposing, without any warrant, so it ought to make us wary too, lest by active submitting, we do abet and own their sin, and so become Parties in the Transgression; There being but little difference, in the sight of God, between him that commands a doubtful thing, and him that doth it, upon no better argument, then because another, who had no power, commanded it: For in that, or in no case, God calls for *Suffering*, and not for *Submitting*.

3. He that obeyes in such a case, must needs sin, because he cannot act in *Faith*, *i. e.* in a sound and thorow Perswasion, that it is lawful for him to obey. For since no Conclusion can have in it greater certainty then the Premises which infer it, I would fain know, how it is possible for him to have any clear satisfaction, who thus argues.

1. The thing commanded, as for example, the *Cross in Baptism*, is in its own nature very disputable, whether it be Lawful or not?

2. The Magistrate who commands it, hath no power to do it; and therefore sins in enjoyning; must not then the Inference be, therefore I shall sin in obeying him, since his Command, when he wants Power, can never make a doubtful thing warrantable or safe to a doubting Conscience. From all which, it follows, that if it be unlawful to command a thing doubtful in Religious Worship, it is equally unlawful to obey it; which is the summe of my First Argument.

My Second Reason shall be taken from the Necessity and Nature of *Christian Liberty*; which as it consists especially in the free use of Indifferent, or Forbearance of doubtful things, so are we bound entirely to preserve it. To clear up which, we must consider, that the whole stream of the Gospel, in reference to these outward things, doth run in such Expressions as these; *If you be my Disciples*, saith our Saviour, *you shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall set you free.* And again, *If the Son shall make you free, you shall* *Arg.* 2. John 8. 31. &c.

Gal. 3.1. V. 13. James 1.25. & 2.12. *shall be free indeed.* So the Apostle *Paul*, *Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free.* And again, *Brethren, you have been called unto Liberty.* So *James* cals the Gospel the *perfect Law of Liberty*: and, *so speak*, saith he, *and so do, as those that shall be judged by the Law of Liberty.* All which places, with many others, to the same purpose, do evince thus much, that it is not a thing meerly arbitrary, and at our pleasure, whether we will preserve our *Christian Liberty* or not; but we are strictly commanded to do it: and the same obedience which we owe to other Divine Precepts, we are obliged to pay unto this, because it is dictated by the same Spirit. Now since this Liberty, as it is mentioned by our Saviour and his Apostles, is only to be exercised in things of Religious Concernment (for as to Civil matters, no doubt, the strictest Obedience to the Magistrates Command, is our Duty) it follows therefore, that when once things, otherwise perhaps *Indifferent*, yet indeed *Doubtful*, come to be made necessary, and forced upon our practise, we are then bound by a meek and Christian, but yet magnanimous Refusal, to assert our Freedom, and not suffer our selves to be entangled by a *Yoke of Bondage*, which is so much the more heavy and galling, because it is confessedly needlesse, and hath no holier end to ratifie it, then meerly an undue will of the Imposer; which if we obey, we then become *Servants of men*, and cowardly desert that 1 Cor. 7.23. Freedom which Christ came to purchase for us: which is quite contrary both to the Command & Practise of the Apostle *Paul*, who though he held *Circumcision*, in some cases to be Indifferent, and accordingly used it; yet when once *False Brethren came to spy out* Gal. 2. *their Liberty*, and by their subtil Discourses *sought to bring them into Bondage*, *Paul* would not yield to them in the least, but constantly opposed the Insinuations of those crafty men (with whom no doubt, Arguments from *Decency* and *Order* were not wanting) that so he might transmit the *Truth*, *i. e.* the *Liberty* of the Gospel unto his Followers: And for his own, both Judgment and Practise, he gives this General Rule, *All things*, *i. e.* which are 1 Cor. 6.12. not forbidden by God, *are Lawful*, but, οὐκ ἐξουσιασθήσομαι ὑπό τινος, *i. e I will not be domineer'd over by any*, or, *I will not suffer any to exercise Authority over me*, as that I should upon his Imperious and unlawful Command, forbear the free use of that which the Lord hath left free unto me.

Against

Against this it is Objected, *Obj.* 1.

1. That *Paul* in his Epistle to the *Galatians*, speaks only of *Circumcision* and *Jewish Ceremonies*; and therefore the *Liberty* he mentions, must only be understood in reference to them, which all acknowledge to be abolished, and without sin, cannot be revived; but this doth not concern other *Christian Rites*, which are introduced, as by another power, so upon another Score, *&c.* not as Parts of Religion, but as Circumstances of meer *Decency* and *Order*. But I Answer.

1. The Apostle *Paul* doth not so confine his Discourse to *Circumcision*, but that in other places he extends it to *Meats and Drinks*, to *Observation of Dayes*, and such like, which are much more indifferent, then those now contested about: Concerning which, the Apostles Assertion is, *That he would not be brought into bondage by any*, but be left as free in the use or forbearance of them, as the Laws of Charity would permit. And therefore whatever the Apostle saies, though properly and immediatly it relates only to *Jewish* Customs, yet since his words are general and indefinite, they must be understood equally to concern all things, that are of a like, and much more those that are of a more doubtful Nature. *Answ.*

2. Though the Apostle did speak only of *Circumcision* and other *Legal Rites*, yet the very same Reason which served to take them away, may easily be improved, to keep back any other from being either imposed or observed in their room. For, 1. Since God himself was the immediate Author of all *Mosaical Ceremonies*. And 2. Since they were afterwards abolished, not because they were sinful, but because they were *unprofitable*; not because they were inconsistent with Salvation, but because they did not sufficiently promote it, as the Apostle witnesses: *There is*, saith he, *a disanulling of the Commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof; for the Law*, *i. e.* of Ceremonies, *made nothing perfect*: Then it followes, that things, 1. Which have not the same Divine warrant and Prescription. And 2. Which are equally, if not more unprofitable, as to what concernes the Conscience, ought not to be introduced or practised; for else we should be very little Gainers, if being set free from Gods, we might be made subject to mans Law, and if in stead of *Divine*, we might own and practise *Humane Impositions*: This would not Heb. 7. 18, 19.

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ease our Yoke, but only alter it, nay make it much more insupportable then the *Jewish* Burden was: For they, in what they did, obeyed a Righteous and Infallible God, and therefore were sure, they could not erre: But we must obey the Arbitrary Fancies of Unrighteous, and Fallible men, concerning whose Authority in imposing, or the Usefulnesse of the things which they impose, we can never be satisfied; since they seem, not only to go beyond their bounds, but likewise by enjoyning such poor things, to play with, rather then to adorn Religion, and in stead of consulting Gods Honour, to provide only Traps and Snares for their Conscientious and soberly dissenting Brethren.

Obj. 2. 2. It is objected again, That the Church was not in the same condition in the Apostle *Pauls* time, that now it is in; for then there was no Civil Magistrate that did so far countenance Christian Religion, as to interpose and meddle with it, and therefore none could enjoyn those things, in the use whereof *Paul* bids them be free; but now the State of things is altered: For Magistrates have taken upon them the care of Religion, unto whose Injunctions we are to yield obedience, according to that of the Apostle, *Let every Soul be Subject to the Higher Powers.*

Answ. I Answer, 1. It is assumed *gratis*, and without the least pretence of Proof, that the Christian Magistrate hath any thing to do to impose in things of Religion: For which, I might bring many Sentences out of *Tertullian*, and especially *Lactantius*, who affirm the same: but the thing is clear; For Civil Government is properly and adequately concerned only in Civil things; but Religious matters belong only to him that is Inspector and Lord of the Conscience; and therefore that Text, *Let every Soul be subject to the Higher Powers*, is in this debate impertinently alledged; since it is evident, that the Apostle wrote it, with reference to *Nero*, who was then Emperour, and certainly did very little trouble himself with things of Religion, except it were to persecute it; and even then when the Magistrate doth so, I acknowledge that we are to *be subject to*, i. e. not to resist him; Nay, further, it followes from the Text, that should our Magistrates become, what they then were, *Heathen* and *Infidels*, yet in all Civil Matters, we were bound to obey them; which I am ready to assert against all, whether *Papal* or other Encroachments. But that the Magistrate either hath power to prescribe

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Religious Rites, or that if he doth prescribe, we ought to submit to him, neither that, nor any other Text of Scripture doth evince, as I have already demonstrated.

2. I deny, that any upon Earth, now hath greater power to impose upon the Church, then those had in the Apostle *Paul's* time. For I take it for granted, that *Peter* was, if not the greatest, yet one of the greatest Persons, that ever was since our Saviours time, and yet when he, by his suspitious and inconstant carriage, gave occasion to the Gentiles, to think, that the *Jewish Rites* ought still to be continued, *Paul* openly reproves him, in these words, *Why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* i. e. Why dost thou seem to lay a constraint upon them, and by the Authority of thy example, induce them to believe, that those Ceremonies are still to be practised? From whence I infer, that if in one who was so great an Apostle, *Paul* would not brook the least scruple of carriage, which might seem to abate and lessen the extent of Christian Liberty, then it follows, Gal. 2.

1. That no Magistrate can lawfully take upon him that power, since the greatest Magistrate on Earth, in things appertaining to Divine Worship, is much inferiour to *Peter*, both for Knowledge and Authority.

2. That if the Magistrate doth take upon himself that power, we are to be so far from complying, as rather, by *Pauls* example, *openly to reprove him*; at least we are to let him know, that we stand engaged to another Master, who hath commanded us to be *free*; and that it is not out of disobedience to the Magistrate, but out of duty to God, if we peaceably assert and maintain our Liberty.

3. The last objection is this, That Christian Liberty consists not in *Freedom of Practise*, but in the *Freedom of Judgment*: And therefore many acknowledge, that if these doubtful things were so imposed, as that thereby we should be obliged to think them *necessary to salvation*, then it was our duty not to do them: But since they are meerly enjoyned by the Magistrate, as things of Outward order, so long we may freely do them, and still retain our Liberty of Conscience. And this is the Summe of what many Learned men, both in their Writings and Discourses do affirm. But I Answer: Obj. 3.

1. That the Distinction is meerly coyned to serve a turn, without Answ.

out the least Foundation, either in *Scripture* or *Reason*. For, 1. It is not grounded on *Scripture*, since all those places wherein we are commanded *not to be the Servants of men, to stand fast in our Liberty*, and the like, do principally respect the freedom of our Practise, in reference to the Imposer, whom we ought not to submit unto. Neither, 2. Is there any colour of Reason for it; for *Liberty of Judgment*, without *Liberty of Practise* suitable to that Judgment, is not only a vain and ludicrous, but a burdensom and vexatious thing; and especially in the Service of God, while we alwaies outwardly do that, which inwardly we do not approve, is nothing else but direct Hypocrisie.

2. The Question is not, Whether any may impose upon our Judgments; which it is evident none can; but whether our Practise, ought not to be left as free as our Judgments, in those things which in reference to his own Worship, God himself hath not determined. The Distinction therefore which supposes, that our Practise may be bound up, and yet our Liberty, which Christ and his Apostles were so tender of, preserved, doth not prove, but only begs the Question: And like such kind of stuffe, is meerly so much dust thrown into our eyes, that we might not read, and make use of our Royal Charter.

I conclude therefore, 1. Since *Christian Liberty* is entirely and indispensably to be preserved, because the same Authority which forbids Murder, doth command that, and it is the Authority of our Law-giver, which gives each Law its Sanction. 2. Since *Christian Liberty* hath place only in the use of Indifferent, or forbearance of doubtful things (for things necessary are already enjoyned by God, whom we are to obey, whether the Magistrate do command them or not) therefore it follows, 1. That whoever takes away the liberty of Practise from us, directly contradicts so many places of Scripture, which do expresly enjoyn it: and then, 2. We cannot without dishonour to God, and violation of one of the greatest outward Priviledges that the Gospel doth indulge us, consent to, or by our Practise seem to approve of any thing which doth so immediatly intrench upon our Christian Freedom: Which is my Second Argument.

Arg. 3. The Third Argument shall be taken from the Nature of the things Imposed, which are not purely and in their own Nature *Indifferent*; for then we need not, and I believe, few would scru-

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ple at the practise of them) but, as I stated above, they are things very *doubtful* and *disputable*, and therefore no Command can make them *Lawful*. For to instance only in one of them, and that is, the *Crosse in Baptism*, I may affirm of that, which I find the Learned *Hales* asserting concerning *Images*. 1. *It is a thing acknowledged by all, that it is unnecessary.* 2. *By most*, at least in this Nation, *it is suspected.* 3. *By many it is held utterly unlawful: Can then the enjoyning of such a thing be ought else but Abuse? Or can the Refusal of* (he sayes, *Communion*, I say) *Submission, be ought else but Duty?*

I am not ignorant that many specious Arguments are brought for some of our *Ceremonies*, as particularly, for *Set Forms of Prayer*, and for *kneeling at the Sacrament* which, because they are obvious, I shall not insist upon: For allowing, but not granting, the utmost of what is said, that to pray by a Book, is a more rational and Composed way of Divine Worship, then to pray from the strength of ones own Meditation, and the Assistance of Gods Spirit; who, because of those Enlargements and quickenings he gives, is peculiarly stiled *the Spirit of Prayer*. 2. Granting that *to kneel*, is a more humble, and therefore a more decent Posture, at the Sacrament, then to *sit*, as our Saviour and his Apostles did; (whose Example sure we may follow without sin) or at least, *to stand*, which is a posture of Prayer, and therefore of Reverence, and lesse subject to harden the Papists, who have so monstrously abused *Kneeling*, by their Idolatry: But granting the Decency and Conveniency of both, yet,

1. Since they are either Parts of, or Additions to Divine worship, unwarrantably devised, and forcibly obtruded.

2. Since the Imposers do lay so much stresse upon them, that, it is evident, though they call them *Indifferent*, yet they think them *Necessary*.

3. Since in these Forms of Prayers, there are those Mixtures, which make our Liturgy, though not simply unlawful, yet highly questionable.

4. Since they are joyned with some other Ceremonies, as the *Crosse in Baptisme*, which are of a more doubtful Nature.

Lastly, Since many, as sober and as Pious Christians, as any are in our Nation, are infinitely grieved at the use of them, and are upon the point of forsaking our Assemblies, because of them. It followes hence,

1. That it doth not at all become the Piety and Prudence of Christian Governours to impose these things which grieve and disturb very many, and in their own nature are grateful to very few? besides such who make use of their Conformity, as the way to Preferment.

2. That no Conscientious Minister, so far as I yet see, can personally bear a part in all these Ceremonies, because he cannot act in Faith, as doing that, 1. Which God requires not. 2. Which his, perhaps weak, but yet Christian Brother, takes offence at, and if the Apostle *Paul* sayes, *he would never eat meat* (which is alwaies lawful, and to some tempers necessary Food) *rather then offend his Brother*, sure he would have forborn a *Cross*, or a *Surplice* much more.

Obj. If any Answer, as some do, that it is *Scandalum acceptum & non datum*, i.e. *an Offence only provisibly taken, but not justly given.*

Answ. I answer, It is *Scandalum datum*, *an Offence justly given*: For he that upon any pretence whatever, doth consent, not only to quit his own Liberty, but likewise in so doing, doth violate and injure the Conscience of another; he gives just occasion to have his action censured, as if he *chose sin rather then Affliction*, since they are only Motives of Convenience, which seem to lie at the bottom, and make him stoop to so mean a Bondage.

Obj. Some object, That it is true, by doing these things, we offend our Brother, but then by refusing, we should offend the Magistrate, who is something more then our Brother, to whom we owe not only the duty of Love, but likewise of Subjection; and therefore the less Offence must give place to the greater. But I answer.

Answ. 1. That if the Magistrate hath no power to impose, as I have already proved, then he hath no reason to be offended at my refusal to obey him; since *eatenus jus non habet*, and therefore I should more *scandalize*, *i. e.* give him a greater occasion of sinning, by submitting to, then by quiet disowning of his Authority. For by submitting, I shall beget this Opinion in him, that he doth well to impose, which is undoubtedly sinful; whereas by disowning his Authority, I only make my self liable to suffering, which every good Christian ought at all times to be prepared for.

2. Our Saviour hath already taught us how little we are to care for the offence which men take at that sober and just use which we make of our Liberty. For when he refused to *wash his hands before*

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meat, (which by the way, was a Rite much more innocent, then those I now dispute of) and gave this for his ground, that it *was a plant not of his Fathers planting*; his Disciples seem to importune him to condescend unto the Pharisees, who were his lawful Governours, by urging, that *they were offended at his Saying*: But our Saviour in stead of assenting, cries out, *let them alone, they are Blind Guides*, with other words, shewing, that while they made use of their Authority, to press such needless Toyes, it was his duty to disobey them. Which carriage of our Saviour is so much the more remarkable, in that, when they came to demand Tribute-money, though he alledged, that by his Birthright he was free from any such Tax, yet, saith he, *rather then offend them*, let us pay it; plainly implying, that in Civil things, not to stand too nicely upon our terms, but for peace sake even to part with some of our Right, is honest and commendable; but in Religious things we must not yield a tittle, because in them, the honour of God is immediatly concerned: For, as being Lord of the Conscience, and sole Dictator of what way he will be served in, he expects, we should upon all occasions, openly assert his Right, and neither *teach for Doctrine*, nor solemnize for Worship, *the Commandments of men*. For, that I may obviate an Exception of some, who alledge, that these things are not imposed as Doctrines: When a Ceremony comes to be urged and pressed, beyond the bounds of a thing Indifferent, here though no Doctrine be mentioned, yet there is a Doctrine couched under it, and that is, this which I have been all this while speaking against, *That the Magistrate hath power to impose in Religious Worship*. So that when things doubtful come upon that score to be obtruded, we must resolutely refuse to do them, lest we should seem to own and assent unto the *Doctrine*. To conclude therefore, Since the things in question, are so pressed, as if the Imposers thought them necessary. 2. Since many of them are very disputable. 3. Since most of them are very scandalous and offensive to our weaker Brethren, it follows, that they are not in their own nature Indifferent, and therefore it cannot be lawful to practise them. And so much for the Third Argument.

The Fourth and last Argument shall be taken from the Resemblance and Correspondency which these things have to others, which we have already renounced in the Popish worship; as likewise

wiſe from the impoſſibility, that any rational or ſober account can be given why we diſſent from thoſe, if we aſſent to theſe. For, I would fain know, wherein lies the true ground of our ſeparation from the *Church* of *Rome*, if not in this, becauſe they obtrude ſuch conditions of Communion, which Gods Word doth not warrant us to aſſent to? For let men ſpeak as much as they pleaſe againſt *Images*, *Crucifixes*, *Praying to Saints*, or for *the Dead*, &c. at laſt it will be found, that the only firm and ſolid Argument to overthrow all theſe things, is this, *They are not written*. God hath no where in his Word commanded ſuch things, and therefore we may ſafely reject them. But on the ſame ſcore, the *Croſs*, the *Surplice*, *Bowing Kneeling*, and the reſt, muſt be rejected too, as being equally uncommanded, : For how can we ſatisfie any inquiſitive man, why in Baptiſm, we have caſt off *Oyle*, and retain the *Croſs*? why in the other Sacrament, we retain *Kneeling*, and refuſe *Adoration*? Why we bow to the *Name* of *Jeſus*, and yet are offended at a *Crucifix*? In ſhort, why we have pared away ſome Rites, either as *Idolatrous*, or elſe as *ſuperfluous*, and yet have retained others, that are equally ſcandalous, equally indefenſible? If we anſwer, that we did it, becauſe *every National Church hath power to judge of Ceremonies*, and to impoſe upon her Subjects, as few or as many as ſhe thinks fit; Will it not inevitably follow, that our Church may when ſhe pleaſes, bring in all thoſe exploded Rites upon us, and when ſhe doth ſo, we are bound to ſubmit unto her Authority? So that all the advantage we have got by our Reformation (which at the beginning of it, was the beſt and the moſt ſtupendious that ever the world ſaw) is only this, that we have lopt off ſome Branches of Popery, but left the Root untouched; as owning that Doctrine of Impoſitions, which may whenever the Magiſtrate pleaſes, bring in the outward practiſe of that Religion again upon us. I do not ſpeak this, as if I did in the leaſt imagine, that our Governours do ſo much as dream of any ſuch thing, but I argue meerly as a rational man, and conſidering the nature of things; for ſince every man then acts rationally, when he acts conformably to the Principle he holds; therefore he that firſt miſtakes things *doubtful*, for things *Indifferent*, and then maintains, that the Magiſtrate hath power to make even things Doubtful, Neceſſary, when he impoſes them; he leaves the Magiſtrate free, to bring in as much of the *Popiſh Worſhip*,

ſhip, as he is pleaſed to think is either decent or convenient.

Since then the *Croſſe*, the *Surplice*, &c. are all of the ſame Idolatrous Nature and Original, with other parts of *Romiſh* Worſhip, which we have worthily rejected, as being coyned in the unlicenſed Mint of mens Brain, without the ſtamp of Divine Authority; it followes, that either we muſt not uſe them, or elſe we muſt acknowledge, that if *Oyl for Infants*, *Holy Unction for the ſick*, *Exorciſmes*, &c. were enjoyned, we could lawfully ſubmit to them too, and ſo never fix our ſelves a certain point of Religious Practiſe, but depend altogether upon the Beck and Pleaſure of our Magiſtrate.

Againſt this, I know not what can be objected, except as ſome affirm, that *the Pope is not Antichriſt*, ſo others will take upon them to prove that *Popery* is not *Idolatry*. If any Proteſtant be of that mind, I hope he thinks of returning ſpeedily to their Communion, but till I underſtand, how *Pictures may be made and placed, if not as Objects, yet as Helps of Devotion*; *how Saints can firſt be Canonized, and then prayed to, how the Bread can be confined to a place, and yet adored as god, how the Virgin* Mary *beſides being prayed to, can be entreated to command her Son*; till I ſay, I underſtand how theſe, and many more ſuch things can be done, and no *Idolatry* committed, I muſt take leave to affirm, that if that *Church* be not *Idolatrous*, there never was, nor can be ſuch a thing as *Idolatry* in the World.

To conclude therefore, I will acknowledge, that *uſing the Croſs*, though not in Baptiſm, is very ancient, and mentioned more then once by *Tertullian* [a], that a peculiar Reverence to the *Name of Jeſus*, is aſſerted by *Origen* [b], that the *Worſhip of Angels*, or ſomthing very like it, is maintained by *Juſtin Martyr* [c] *Prayer for the Dead*, as I remember, by *Cyprian*, I am ſure by *Tertullian* [d], *Purgatory* by *Arnobius*, &c. But yet theſe Opinions, which in thoſe Excellent Writers (who were newly recovered out of *Gentiliſme*) were very tolerable Miſtakes and Errours, did neither hurt them, nor the Church of Chriſt, till the world was grown lazy enough to believe, and the Biſhop of *Rome* had force enough to impoſe them, as Neceſſary Doctrines. This is that which not only diffuſed, but ſo far fixed the fatal Poyſon of Errour, that the world can never expect to be freed, till it pleaſes God to raiſe up ſome generous and truly Heroick Prince, who

a *Apolog.*
b *Lib. adv. Celſ.*
c *Apolog. 2.*
d *Apolog.*

who may be convinced of the truth of Christian Religion, not by hear-say from others, but by a through search and enquiry into the Causes of it himself, and growing from thence assured, that nothing can more hinder the Progress of the Gospel, then to disguise and alter its simplicity (for a strange dress must needs render it suspected) will resolve to give it a free and undisturbed Passage, and never draw his Sword, but when Malice and Ignorance do joyn together, not only to oppose, but to persecute it; how will Truth then, being unfettered and set free, from the Clogges of pretended *Decency*, but indeed Antichristian Tyranny, run through this Nation, and chase Errour before it, as the Light doth Darkness? This Great and Glorious work I dare almost prophecy that his *Majesty* is reserved for, whose pious and unequalled *Declaration*, hath already indulged as much Liberty, as any sober-minded Christian can pretend to: and which will then undoubtedly be made a Law, when by our constant and chearful Sufferings for this Doctrine of *Liberty*, we have expiated and washed away those Scandals, which our many odious and unparallel'd Abuses have cast upon it.

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